

**ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)**

THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025

Present:-

Group 1

D. Homer

T.Williams

Group 2

H. Lambert (Chair)

Group 3

N. Choudry

Group 4

Councillor Ismail

Councillor Cusworth

F. Radford.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters of business for which it was deemed necessary to exclude members of the public or press.

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the last meeting on 5 December 2024, were approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

36. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

This item provided an update on continuous professional development, including the following:

The Subject Leader Meeting for ROSIS

- The most recent Subject Leader meeting for ROSIS was in the form of a question-and-answer panel, which included a Buddhist representative, a Bahai representative, a Muslim representative and a Jewish representative.
- Participation in the meeting was smaller than expected, however all who attended were enthusiastic and open and transparent of the struggles they were facing relating to the required knowledge and resources relating to each faith. SACRE members present offered attendee's the option to approach Rotherham SACRE for SACRE's resource list, if it would be helpful.
- Teachers provided positive feedback from the meeting and advised that it was helpful for them to be able to think about personal world views.

The Lat Blaylock Course

- Lat Blaylock was a primary and secondary Religious Education (RE) Specialist and Consultant. Lat was also the Editor of RE Today. Lat had delivered many training sessions with Rotherham SACRE in the past and had worked with Rotherham SACRE to develop the last two syllabuses.
- This course provided had context to the Ofsted Research Review and how Rotherham SACRE could promote aspects raised within the report that related to areas that Ofsted found were not strong enough. Lat provided SACRE members who attended the course with good practical ideas for the classroom.
- Lat generally delivered one course every year for Rotherham SACRE.

37. TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW PROJECT UPDATE

The Together for Tomorrow Project

- The Local Authority had been successful in a funding bid to support the delivery of projects and education within the borough, following on from the unrest and disorder in Rotherham, during the summer of 2024.
- The plan for the funding was to develop the Together for Tomorrow Project, which would focus on bringing together PHSE and the RE Curriculum. The funding would be used to raise awareness of different cultures and beliefs and bring the communities of Rotherham together through schools and the curriculum. It would also be a good project to raise the profile of religious education.
- The project would be available to all schools in Rotherham and content would be recorded and hosted on www.forgecpd.com
- The Chair of SACRE and the SACRE CYPS officer in attendance at the meeting would be part of the Steering Group which would progress the project. At the end of the project there would be a celebration of the work completed throughout the project and an art exhibition would be held. It was suggested that the art exhibition could be linked to the Children's Capital of Culture.
- Once the funding would be over, it was anticipated that the project would be sustainable and would be progressed through the curriculum.
- Members of SACRE were keen for visits to take place between schools to develop and create friendships and asked whether the funding could be used for this element.
- The Local Authority worked with an individual who ran an anti-bullying company, who had run an assembly for all schools within Aston for Internet Safety Day 2025. Following the assemblies,

natural connections had been formed between different classes in different schools. An example was provided of two schools linking together, one school faced a challenge when teaching diversity as it was pre-dominantly a white British school. This particular school was linked with another school which included many different faiths and beliefs, which was helpful to promote diversity.

- There used to be a Linking Schools Project that was run by the local authority. Two schools had linked and as a result, both schools met virtually and visited each other's schools twice a year.
- It was agreed that the Together for Tomorrow Project would be a good opportunity to encourage schools to develop links. There was also a partner at Forge CPD who would be a partner in the project and would be able to provide their technical IT skills to the project.
- Conversation at the Subject Leader Question and Answer Session mentioned above, focused on the lack of tolerance and requirement to assist with building up respect for other faiths and world views, this would be a big part of what SACRE members could contribute to the project.

Actions- Rotherham SACRE agreed that:

- The Chair would meet the local authority CYPS representative for the Together for Tomorrow Project before Easter, to discuss the progression of the Together for Tomorrow Project.
- SACRE members would give thought to how their faith and beliefs, either religious or non-religious, impacted their life. Members were asked to complete a video on their thoughts on this.
- The Chair would find out who led the Linking Schools Project and would let the local authority CYPS representative know.

38. SACRE REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE

The item provided an update on the proposed draft revised Terms of Reference and SACRE Constitution document, which was presented to SACRE members for their consideration. During the update the following was noted:

- The Briefing Report on (pages 9-11) detailed the main changes to the revised document.
- The revised document had been reviewed and approved by the Monitoring Officer, the intention was for the draft document to be presented to Full Council for approval in May, as part of a wider Constitution Review.
- A high-level overview was provided of the main changes to the document, which were as follows:
 - Additions to the composition of membership of SACRE section, such as Humanism.
 - Further detail on co-opted members.
 - An additional paragraph to include the terms of office for SACRE members.
 - Detailed roles and responsibilities list for the role of the SACRE Chair, Vice-Chair, Professional SACRE Advisor and the role of the responsible officer from Children's and Young Peoples Services
 - Required contributions to the SACRE Annual Report.
 - Additional information on the voting procedures in SACRE, to ensure it complies with the relevant legislation.
 - Additional information on SACRE meetings, including the required number of SACRE meetings and the process for requesting additional SACRE meetings.
 - Additional information on the administration of SACRE

including the role of the Governance Advisor, the details of the process for SACRE members to propose agenda items, the details of agenda setting meetings and distribution of agendas and minutes and additional information on disputes and complaints.

Following the update provided, discussions took place on the following points:

- In relation to member substitutes at SACRE meetings, the Terms of Reference did not explicitly state whether substitutes would be able to vote at meetings and members felt this may be a helpful addition. The Governance Advisor advised that they did not believe substitutes would have the ability to cast a vote, however this would be taken away as an action and a response provided to SACRE members on this matter via email, following the meeting.
- It was noted that in 3.16 of the documents, it stated that the local authority was required to provide sufficient funds and support for SACRE to perform its duties.
- It was noted that SACRE had struggled to secure funding from the local authority in the past. In a recent year Rotherham SACRE were told by the local authority that their funding drastically reduced, with no consultation with SACRE members on this matter. The SACRE were unable to complete their full statutory duties as a result of the funding reduction.
- The current funding to SACRE for the year 2024-2025 was six thousand pounds. The funding paid for the specialist RE Advisor to SACRE's time and was at a good level for SACRE to carry out its statutory duties. SACRE also made money by charging schools who were not part of ROSIS for their attendance at Lat Blaylock courses.
- Following clarifications in legislation, Humanism had been added to

Group A of the membership composition within the document.

Actions- Rotherham SACRE agreed that:

- The Governance Advisor would seek advice on the point raised relating to substitutes and voting rights. Once confirmed the response would be circulated to SACRE members via email.

39. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

An update was provided on SACRE Membership, during which the following was noted:

- The SACRE Membership included a number of members who had not attended a SACRE or provided any communication with SACRE within a two-year period.
- Draft attendance letters were included within the agenda pack and it was proposed that the template letters be circulated to any members who had not attended the last three meetings, to ask whether they would like to be removed from the membership of SACRE and whether they could provide a nomination for their replacement on SACRE. SACRE members agreed for this to take place.
- A discussion took place on whether Democratic Services could develop a SACRE webpage, where current membership vacancies could be advertised to promote further attendance.

Actions- Rotherham SACRE agreed that:

- Councillor Ismail would contact a Jewish representative that she knew to discuss a potential nomination for Jewish representation on SACRE.

40. DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

An update was provided on the SACRE Development Plan, during which

the following was noted:

- The SACRE Development Plan had not been circulated ahead of the meeting and would be circulated to members following the meeting.
- SACRE were asked to consider what they would like to develop during the next academic year for 2025-2026.
- On the Development Plan for 2025-2026, the development of primary subject leaders would be included, this was a yearly addition to the plan. It was advised that an aim would be to include secondary subject leaders in the plan also.
- The Together for Tomorrow Project would be part of the Development Plan, for SACRE members to consider how they could support the project.
- The next syllabus was due for publication in 2026, and SACRE needed to consider beginning the review, via a sub-group. Rotherham were in a fortunate position as the agreed syllabus should only require tweaking rather than a full revision. However, with the new focus on world views the syllabus would need slightly changing to reflect this. Lat Blaylock was usually commissioned to work with the Council and SACRE members on the revision of the syllabus.
- There had been no nominations to date, for the REwards Ceremony planned for June 2025. SACRE would continue to promote this, the Cabinet Member for CYPS would also promote the REwards where possible.
- The SACRE Budget was currently shared with the Chair by CYPS. In future, the SACRE Budget Report would be presented to SACRE by CYPS on an annual basis.

Actions- Rotherham SACRE agreed that:

- The Development Plan would be provided by the Chair and circulated to SACRE members following the meeting.
- The Governance Advisor would look into the option and possibility of arranging an Agreed Syllabus Conference, in conjunction with other relevant officers.
- The Agreed Syllabus Review would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of Rotherham SACRE, in June 2025.
- The Governance Advisor would circulate the agreed REwards categories to the Cabinet Member for CYPS.
- The curriculum review was on-going, there was no decision currently on whether there would be a national syllabus for RE moving forwards, or whether local syllabuses would remain in place.

41. 2025-2026 SACRE DATES

An update was provided on the Calendar of Meetings for the municipal year 2025-2026, which were agreed by Council in March 2025. The 2025-2206 SACRE meeting dates were as follows:

- 5 June 2025
- 18 September 2025
- 4 December 2025
- 19 March 2026.

Resolved:- That Rotherham SACRE agreed the 2025-2026 meeting dates for SACRE.

42. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

43. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education was scheduled for 5 June 2025, commencing at 4.00pm at Rotherham Town Hall.